

1 Kings Chapter 19

1 Kings 19:1 "And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword."

"Jezebel" was a Phoenician princess (a daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon), who married King Ahab of Israel and enticed him to sin (16:31; 21:25).

She was a tyrant who corrupted her husband, as well as the nation, with pagan idolatry.

A worshiper of the Phoenician god Baal and a zealous missionary, she supported some 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah (18:19), and sought to suppress the worship of the LORD (18:4, 13).

Jezebel was Elijah's formidable adversary; even instilling fear in him (verses 1-3).

Her influence in Israel was strong during the reigns of her husband Ahab and of her sons Ahaziah and Jehoram.

Her power extended to the southern kingdom of Judah, where her daughter Athaliah became queen (2 Kings 8:18).

Elijah's prophecy, "The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel" (21:23), was fulfilled when Jehu seized power (2 Kings 9-10; Hos. 1:4).

(Revelation 2:20), mentions a false prophetess by the same name (1 Kings 16:31; 1 Kings Chapter 21).

Ahab is so excited about the presence of the LORD coming down and consuming the sacrifice with fire, that he tells Jezebel at the first opportunity.

You would believe that such an account of the majesty of God would cause her to stop and think of her error in having these false prophets of Baal.

Of course, Ahab is claiming this victory for Elijah.

Verses 2-3

Elijah had just stood on Mount Carmel and withstood 450 prophets of Baal, and he had outrun Ahab to Jezreel.

But at the news that "Jezebel" was coming, he ran as fast and as long as he could.

For a moment, Elijah forgot all that God had done and acted in fear rather than faith.

1 Kings 19:2 "Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do [to me], and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."

How often mountaintops of spiritual victory are followed by valleys and deserts of testing.

Vile "Jezebel" was a vicious and ruthless opponent (16:31-33; 21:11-15, 25).

Instead of her accepting Elijah as the man of God, she sends him word she intends to kill him.

She is taking revenge for the death of the prophets of Baal.

She made a bad mistake in her reply, when she says, if she does not kill him for the same thing to happen to her.

Verses 3-4

Perhaps Elijah had come to expect the spiritual high life of extraordinary events.

He was to learn of another dimension of service.

"A juniper tree" (or broom bush), often reaches a height of 10 feet.

1 Kings 19:3 "And when he saw [that], he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which [belongeth] to Judah, and left his servant there."

"Went for his life":

His hope shattered, Elijah fled as prophet, broken by Jezebel's threats (verse 2), her unrepentant Baalism, and her continuing power over Israel.

Elijah expected Jezebel to surrender; when she did not capitulate, he became a discouraged man (verses 4, 10, 14).

"Beer-sheba":

A city located 100 miles south of Jezreel (18:45-46), in the Negev.

It marked the southern boundary of the population of Judah.

Fear entered Elijah, and he ran for his life.

He knows just how ruthless this Jezebel is.

Beer-sheba was now part of Judah.

It had been Part of Simeon's holdings before.

It appears that Elijah had carried a servant with him, and left him in Beer-sheba.

Verses 4-8

This journey should have taken, at most, a day and a half.

Instead, God spent “forty days and ... nights” preparing Elijah, as He did so many other servants of His (see Chapters of Gen. 7; Deut. 9; Num. 13; Matt. 4; including Moses, twice in Exodus 24; 34).

1 Kings 19:4 "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I [am] not better than my fathers."

“Juniper tree”:

A desert bush that grew to a height of 10 feet.

It had slender branches featuring small leaves and fragrant blossoms.

“Take away my life”:

Since Israelites believed that suicide was an affront to the LORD; it was not an option, whatever the distress.

So Elijah asked the LORD for death (Jonah 4:3, 8), because he viewed the situation as hopeless.

Job (Job 6:8-9), Moses (Num. 11:10-15), and Jeremiah (Jer. 20:14-18), had also reacted in similar fashion during their ministries.

Elijah is human and he is tired of running and fighting.

He desires to die and be with the LORD.

Almost everyone who has ever done anything for the LORD has felt this same despair.

Just because the calling is of God under inspiration, does not keep someone from feeling weary in the flesh.

He had fled into the wilderness to get away from the rejection he had encountered.

The juniper tree protects from the wind and the sun.

It gives a nice shade and a place to rest.

We will find that Elijah never really dies, but is transported into heaven without going the way of the grave.

I see in this despair, a tired man who feels he had failed God.

Verses 5-7

God provided for Elijah's physical needs before meeting his spiritual and emotional needs.

It has been suggested that what happened to Jesus after His temptation in the wilderness (Matt. 4:11), was very much like what happened when the "angel" ministered to Elijah.

1 Kings 19:5 "And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise [and] eat."

Being weary and fatigued with his journey, the same under which he sat; for there was but one, as that is said to be in the preceding verse.

"Behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, arise, and eat":

So far was the LORD from granting his request to take away his life, that he made provision to preserve it.

So careful was he of him, as to give an angel charge to get food ready for him, and then awake him to eat of it.

God is a very present help to those who do His will.

He is with Elijah, and sends an angel to minister to him.

Probably one of the reasons Elijah was so tired, was because he had not taken the time to eat. When we are tired, things look much worse than they do after we are rested.

1 Kings 19:6 "And he looked, and, behold, [there was] a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again."

"Cake ... and ... water":

As at Cherith and Zarephath (17:6, 19), God provided food and drink for Elijah in the midst of his distress and the surrounding famine.

Again, God had sent him miracle provisions.

Now that his hunger is taken care of, he lays down to rest again.

1 Kings 19:7 "And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise [and] eat; because the journey [is] too great for thee."

In order to awaken him out of sleep.

"And said, Arise, and eat; because the journey is too great for thee":

Which he had to go to Horeb, without eating more than he had; and there were no provisions to be had in a common way and manner in his road thither.

For "The angel of the LORD" (see the note on Judges 2:1-5).

He was probably so tired at first that he ate very little.

Now, he is told by the angel to eat heartily for the journey is hard.

Angels are ministering spirits sent by God to help His children.

1 Kings 19:8 "And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God."

"Forty days":

Elijah's trip took over double the time it should have taken.

Therefore, the period had symbolic meaning as well as showing literal time.

As the people of Israel had a notable spiritual failure and so wandered 40 years in the wilderness (Num. 14:26-35), so a discouraged Elijah was to spend 40 days in the desert.

As Moses had spent 40 days on the mountain without bread and water, sustained only by God as he awaited a new phase of service (Exodus 34:28), so Elijah was to spend 40 days depending on God's enablement as he prepared for a new commission from the LORD.

As Moses had seen the presence of God (Exodus 33:12-23), so Elijah experienced a manifestation of God.

The "forty days and forty nights" of wandering to "Horeb" (Sinai), were doubtless symbolic for Elijah.

They reminded him of Moses and the children of Israel from whose experiences he was to learn a spiritual lesson (Exodus 34:28: Num. 14:26-35).

Mount Horeb (Sinai), is where Moses received his commissioning at the burning bush (Exodus Chapter 3), and where Moses smote the rock and water miraculously came out.

More importantly, on this very mountain where God instructed Moses regarding the formation of Israel, He instructed Elijah about the reformation of Israel.

“Horeb”:

An alternate name for Mt. Sinai, located about 200 miles south of Beer-sheba.

Elijah ate and drank as he had been instructed to.

This food and drink must sustain him for forty days and nights.

Forty throughout the Bible, speaks of a time of trials and testing.

Moses had gone forty days and nights when he went on the mountain to get the Ten Commandments.

Jesus was tempted forty days and nights also.

There are few who can truly fast for that length of time with no food or water.

Mount Horeb was known as the Mount of God, because of the law of God received there.

Verses 9-21

By answering God’s question, Elijah did what discouraged people do, he selectively, and inaccurately, reported the facts, magnifying the problem and minimizing the good.

In this case, he underestimated the strength of God and overestimated the strength of the enemy. Yet God would minister to him through:

1. The demonstration of His presence;
2. The small voice;
3. The new assignment;
4. The assurance that there were still many who were like him; and
5. The supply of a ministry partner and friend.

1 Kings 19:9 "And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD [came] to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?"

This cave, some travelers say, is to be seen at this day, not far from a church dedicated to the prophet Elijah.

And that the cave itself has the appearance of a chapel.

But a more particular account of it is given in a journal lately published, which says, this cave exists to this very day.

And is situated at the foot of Mount Sinai, and is now enclosed in a church built of red and white granite marble, the entrance into which is from the west.

The dimensions of this cave are in length five feet, in depth four feet, and in height four and a half.

"And, behold, the word of the LORD came to him":

An articulate voice was heard by him.

"And he said unto him, what dost thou here, Elijah?"

This is not a proper place for a prophet to be in, in a wilderness, in a mountain, in a cave in it.

What work could he do for God?

Or what service to his people?

In the land of Israel, he might bear his testimony against idolatry.

And so be a means of reclaiming backsliders, and of establishing those that were in the true religion.

But of what usefulness could he be here?

Abarbanel takes it to be a reproof of Elijah, for going into a place as holy as it was, and in which Moses, the chief of the prophets, had been.

And that it did not become such a man as he was to be in such a place.

Elijah had run to safety from Jezebel.

There were so many caves in the area, that it would have been difficult for them to find him.

Of course, the LORD knows where we are and what we are doing at all times.

He knows that Elijah was in the cave.

I do not agree that God was angry with him, as some of the scholars do.

He had not disobeyed God.

He had done exactly what God had asked him to do.

I believe this was a comforting Word from God, and not a reprimand.

We all get weary in our labors and our battles with the enemy.

Sometimes we too want to run and hide.

This just shows that Elijah was human.

Verses 10 and 14

Elijah viewed the Israelites as rebels against the Mosaic Covenant, a rebellion that his ministry had been unable to arrest (see verse 3).

Paul used this incident as an illustration (in Rom. 11:3).

1 Kings 19:10 "And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, [even] I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

Through zeal for the glory of God he had slain four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and this had stirred up the malice and revenge of Jezebel against him, who sought his life.

And which had obliged him to flee, and come to this place for shelter.

This is the first part of his answer, others follow.

"For the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant":

The law, especially the two first commandments delivered in this very place; and therefore, he could hope for no protection from them, but was forced to leave his country.

"Thrown down thy altars":

Which had been built in times past for the worship of God, to sacrifice thereon to him, but were now demolished, that those that would not bow the knee to Baal, and could not go to Jerusalem, might make no use of them.

"And slain thy prophets with the sword":

Which was done by Jezebel, the Israelites conniving at it, and consenting to it, and not daring to oppose her.

Slain all she had knowledge of, or even were known by the prophet: hence it follows.

"And I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away":

All this Elijah said, as it seems, not only to excuse himself for fleeing, and taking up his abode where he was, but to stir up the indignation of God against Israel for their idolatries and murders, and to put him upon inflicting his judgments on them for the same.

This is Elijah's reply to the LORD.

He had boldly gone before the prophets of Baal, even though there had been 450 of them.

He had proclaimed God to the whole land.

His despair is because he believes he is the only one left who truly believes in God.

He ran, because Jezebel had given orders to kill him.

He had not run from the job God had given him.

He ran after he completed it.

Verses 11-13

God used three signs that traditionally accompany His presence.

"Wind, earthquake, fire" (Exodus 40:38; Zech. 14:4-5; Acts 2:2-3).

To communicate to Elijah on the mountainside His presence in the "still small voice" suggests that God works in gentle ways as well as powerful ways.

All of these phenomena could, at times, be indicative of the LORD's presence.

But God is not present just in extraordinary things.

1 Kings 19:11 "And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; [but] the LORD [was] not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; [but] the LORD [was] not in the earthquake:"

“The LORD passed by”:

The 3 phenomena, wind, earthquake and fire, announced the imminent arrival of the LORD (Exodus 19:16-19; Psalm 18:7-15; Hab. 3:3-6).

The LORD’s self-revelation to Elijah came in a faint, whispering voice (verse 12).

The lesson for Elijah was that Almighty God was quietly, sometimes imperceptibly, doing His work in Israel (verse 18).

The strong wind has been mentioned many times in connection with the LORD.

We know the rushing mighty wind brought the tongues of fire that sat on them at Pentecost.

We also know that it was not unusual for the LORD to be associated with an earthquake.

At Mount Sinai, we had seen this.

On this particular occasion, the LORD was not in these.

The forces of nature are generally so magnificent, that they cause people to bow to the LORD.

1 Kings 19:12 "And after the earthquake a fire; [but] the LORD [was] not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."

As he was when he descended on this mount, and spoke to Moses (Exodus 19:1).

The Targum, and so Jarchi, interprets all these appearances of angels.

And not amiss; the wind, of a host of angels of wind.

The earthquake, of a host of angels of commotion.

The fire, of a host of angels of fire (see Psalm 104:4).

These ministers of the LORD went before him, to prepare the way of his glorious Majesty; which emblems may represent the power of God, the terribleness of his majesty.

And the fury of his wrath, which he could display, if he would, to the destruction of his enemies.

And could as easily destroy the idolatrous kingdom of Israel, which Elijah seems to be solicitous of, as the wind rent the mountains, and broke the rocks.

And the earthquake shook the earth, and the fire consumed all in its way.

But he chose not to do it now, but to use leniency, and show mercy, signified by the next emblem.

"And after the fire a still small voice":

Not rough, but gentle, more like whispering than roaring; something soft, easy, and musical.

The Targum is, the voice of those that praise God in silence.

And all this may be considered as showing the difference between the two dispensations of law and Gospel.

The law is a voice of terrible words, and was given amidst a tempest of wind, thunder, and lightning, attended with an earthquake (Hebrews 12:18).

But the Gospel is a gentle voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ.

And may also point at the order and manner of the LORD's dealings with the souls of men, who usually by the law breaks the rocky hearts of men in pieces, shakes their consciences, and fills their minds with a sense of fiery wrath and indignation they deserve.

And then speaks comfortably to them, speaks peace and pardon through the ministration of the Gospel by his Spirit.

Blessed are the people that hear this still, small, gentle voice, the joyful sound (Psalm 89:15).

Our God is a consuming fire.

Elijah had experienced that at Mount Carmel.

He is a still quiet voice to bring peace to Elijah here.

I have discovered that the LORD is whatever we need at the time of our crises.

Elijah had been a teacher of the people through signs and wonders.

God had shown him signs and wonders here as well.

Zechariah 4:6 "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This [is] the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

1 Kings 19:13 "And it was [so], when Elijah heard [it] that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, [there came] a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?"

Through reverence of the divine Majesty he perceived was there, and through shame and confusion under a sense of his impurity, imperfections, and unworthiness, as the seraphim in (Isa. 6:2), and as Moses (Exodus 3:6), and went out and stood in the entering in of the cave.

He attempted to come forth out of the cave upon the divine order (1 Kings 19:11), but was stopped by the terrible appearances of the wind, earthquake, and fire.

A little within it; but now he came out, and stood at the mouth of it, to hear what the LORD would say unto him.

"And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, what dost thou here, Elijah?"

The same question is here put as in (1 Kings 19:9), though there by an angel, here by the LORD himself.

Elijah was aware that you could not look upon God and live.

He wraps his face with his mantle.

All of the violent wind, earthquake, and fire cause Elijah to stay in the cave until it is over.

He comes out when he hears the still quiet voice.

This is the same question as earlier.

The difference is the first time the Word of the LORD came to him.

This time it is the audible voice of God.

1 Kings 19:14 "And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, [even] I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

Elijah, in answer to the question put, and he says the same as before.

"I have been very jealous":

Which the question was designed to draw from him, in order to give him some instructions and directions.

Which would suggest to him, that though he should not deal severely with Israel, or with Ahab and his house.

Yet he would hereafter by the kings he should anoint over Syria and Israel, and by the prophet he should anoint in his room, as instruments of his vengeance.

Elijah is feeling futility in telling these idolatrous people of the LORD.

He believes that all he had done was wasted.

He could not understand Ahab allowing Jezebel to try to kill him, after he had been present at Mount Carmel.

Elijah wants to do God's will, but he has lost confidence in his own ability to change things.

God was showing Elijah in the wind, earthquake, fire, and the still quiet voice that God works in many different ways.

More people are won to the LORD by peaceful measures, than by wars.

Verses 15-17

The LORD instructed Elijah to anoint Hazael of Aram (see 2 Kings 8:8), Jehu (see 2 Kings 9:2), and Elisha (verse 19), for the purpose of commissioning them to destroy Baal worship in Israel.

Through these 3 men, the LORD completed the execution of Baal worshipers that Elijah had begun.

Actually, Elijah commissioned only the last of these 3 men directly, the other two were indirectly commissioned through Elisha.

Elisha was involved in Hazael's becoming Syria's king (2 Kings 8:7-14), and one of Elisha's associates anointed Jehu (2 Kings 9:1-3).

By the time the last of these men died (2 Kings 13:24), Baalism had been officially barred from Israel.

God would assign three men to complete what Elijah had begun in removing Baal worship from Israel.

One of them, "Elisha," would be God's answer to the solitary Elijah's need for a friend.

Elisha's name means "God Saves".

1 Kings 19:15 "And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael [to be] king over Syria:"

"The wilderness of Damascus":

The Syrian Desert south and east of the city of Damascus, the city located to the northeast of Israel.

For "Hazael" (see the note on 2 Kings. 8:13-15).

The physical anointing of Hazael is not mentioned elsewhere.

If Elijah did this, he did it in private.

This could have been the LORD's way of telling Elijah that Hazael was His choice to lead Syria at this time.

God raises up men of all kinds to do the job He has for them to do at the time.

1 Kings 19:16 "And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint [to be] king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint [to be] prophet in thy room."

"Elisha" was a prophet of the northern kingdom of Israel and succeeded Elijah (verse 16).

Elisha ministered about 50 years, serving during the reigns of Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Joash.

He presented the Word of God through prophecy, advised and anointed kings, helped the needy, and preformed various miracles.

Elisha was called to ministry through Elijah (verse 21).

He received a double portion of Elijah's spirit, performing twice as many miracles as Elijah (2 Kings 2:9-10).

Elisha's work within Israel was both personal and political. Some of his personal accomplishments include the follow:

1. He purified a spring (2 Kings 2:19-22);
2. He raised the Shunammite's only son (2 Kings 4:18-37);
3. He provided an antidote for poisonous stew (2 Kings 4:38-41);
4. He healed Naaman's leprosy (2 Kings 5:1-19);
5. He recovered a lost axe head (2 Kings 6:1-7).

But Elisha's greatest work was political:

1. He provided water to a thirsty army (2 Kings 3:4-20);
2. He helped rout the Moabites (2 Kings 3:21-27);
3. He helped avert disaster at the hands of the Syrians (2 Kings 6:13-7:20);
4. He aided the overthrow of Ben-hadad of Damascus (2 Kings 8:7-15), and Jehu of Israel (2 Kings (9:1-13);
5. From his deathbed he prophesied Joash's defeat of the Syrians (2 Kings 13:14-19).

Even Elisha's bones had miraculous power (2 Kings 13:21 see 1 Kings 19:16; 2 Kings Chapters 2-8, 13).

"Abel-meholah":

The hometown of Elisha was located in the Jordan Valley, 10 miles south of Beth-shanon, in the tribal allotment of Manasseh.

This could be like the private anointing of David.

It does not have to be mentioned specifically in the Bible, for it to have been done.

I believe Elijah did just as he was commanded of God to do.

It was the will of God for Jehu to be king of Israel.

Sometimes God uses evil men to carry out His will.

God does not make them evil.

They are already evil.

God just uses them.

Elisha followed Elijah and served him for about ten years.

He was in training, watching everything that Elijah did.

"Elisha" means "my God is salvation".

The Scripture above does not mean that Elisha is to immediately take over from Elijah, but when Elijah ceases to prophesy, Elisha will begin.

1 Kings 19:17 "And it shall come to pass, [that] him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay."

Which suggests that many should be slain in Israel by them both, as were by Hazael (2 Kings 10:32), and by Jehu (2 Kings 9:24).

"And him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay":

Which may be understood either literally of the forty two children cursed by him, in consequence of which they were destroyed by bears (2 Kings 2:24).

Or rather figuratively by his prophecies (see Hosea 6:5), who foretold the slaughters made by Hazael and Jehu, as well as others (see 2 Kings 8:12).

These several things were not done in the order in which they are here put.

For what Elisha did was before Hazael and Jehu, and Jehu before Hazael.

These words therefore do not respect the exact order of time in which they should be done, only that each should do the part appointed and assigned unto him, and what could not be so well done by the other.

Thus Hazael was to destroy those that came out to war; and Jehu, Ahab's family that did not.

And Elisha the children of idolatrous parents at Bethel, that came not within the reach of either; though it may be observed, that Hazael began to distress Israel before Jehu appeared (2 Kings 8:28).

And the prophecies of Elisha might not have their full accomplishment until after Hazael and Jehu had done what was appointed for them.

We see in this, that God had established Hazael to destroy the children of Israel, who had completely turned away from God.

His sword was a physical sword, which killed the people.

Elisha was a prophet of God, and he did not physically kill the people.

Elisha's sword was the Word of God.

This is speaking of slaying their beliefs with the Word of God.

Elijah had complained that the entire nation had followed false gods.

This probably, is to reassure him that God knows about all of that, and has it under control.

1 Kings 19:18 "Yet I have left [me] seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

Paul used God's response to Elijah (as an illustration in Rom. 11:4).

"Kissed him":

Kissing the image or symbol of Baal was apparently a common act in worship (Hosea 13:2).

All true believers in Christ can relate to Elijah here.

Sometimes we too, wonder just how many other true believers are out there.

There are others, just as there was with Elijah.

God reassures Elijah that there are 7,000 that still believe.

This is a small percentage of the mass of the people.

These represent the remnant, which had never stopped worshipping God.

They had not followed the ways of the masses.

They had never bowed to Baal.

It appears it must have been the custom to kiss the hand of the idols.

Sometimes they even kissed the idols on the mouth.

This was their way of showing great admiration for the idol.

Verses 19-20

The "mantle," or cloak, was an outer garment that was symbolic of the prophet's office.

Elisha wholeheartedly followed Elijah, pausing only to make a break with his old life by kissing his "father and ... mother" and destroying the "yoke of oxen" that were his livelihood.

Verses 19-21

"Elisha" did not mistake his prophetic summons.

His response was decisive.

He burned his past behind him.

How different are those whose profession is merely external (Matt. 8:18-22; Luke 9:57-62).

In serving Elijah, much as Joshua had served under Moses, Elisha would learn that the secret to a successful ministry lies in having a servant's heart (Mark 9:35).

1 Kings 19:19 "So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who [was] plowing [with] twelve yoke [of oxen] before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him."

"Elisha":

This name means "my God is salvation" and belonged to Elisha, the successor to Elijah (see 2 Kings. 2:9-15).

"Shaphat":

Elisha's father, whose name meant "he judges."

"Twelve yoke of oxen":

It was a common practice for several teams of oxen, each with its own plow and driver, to work together in a row.

After letting the others pass, Elijah threw his mantle around the last man, Elisha, thus designating him as his successor.

Even though Elijah had been afraid of Jezebel and ran to the cave, he came out on command of God and immediately sought out Elisha.

As he passed by Elisha plowing in the field, he threw his mantle upon him.

This was a call for Elisha to follow him.

This was saying, someday you will take my place as prophet.

1 Kings 19:20 "And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and [then] I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?"

"Go back again":

Elijah instructed Elisha to go, but to keep in mind the solemn call of God and not to allow any earthly affection to detain his obedience.

Elisha undoubtedly had heard of Elijah.

He must have greatly admired him.

He perhaps, knew what was meant by the mantle of Elijah being thrown upon him.

He wasted no time.

He came immediately to Elijah, and then asked for permission to go back and tell his parents goodbye.

Elijah had done what the LORD wanted him to, but he had not asked the young man to give up his family to follow him.

1 Kings 19:21 "And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him."

“Gave”:

The slaughter of the oxen was a farewell feast for family and friends, indicating that Elisha was making a decisive break.

He followed Elijah and became his servant (literally “aide”), the same term used for Joshua’s relationship with Moses (in Exodus 24:13; 33:11).

Just as Elijah resembled Moses, so Elisha resembled Joshua.

It is strange for a man plowing a field to kill the oxen he was plowing with, and use the wooden part of the plow to cook the oxen. This farewell dinner he prepared was also a sign that he would no longer be behind a plow.

He had burned the plow and killed the oxen, which broke all ties with his old life.

He made a quick, but thorough decision to follow Elijah and serve him.

We will find later that he serves him and learns from him 10 years, before he takes his place as priest.

1 Kings Chapter 19 Questions

1. Who did Ahab tell about the happenings at Mount Carmel?
2. What Did Jezebel do, when she heard of this?
3. What is the terrible mistake she made in her answer?
4. Where did Elijah run to for safety?

5. Where did he leave his servant?
6. Why did he choose a juniper tree to rest under?
7. What did Elijah ask God to do for him?
8. What does the author see in Elijah's despair?
9. Who came and ministered to Elijah, while he was under the juniper tree?
10. What had the angel brought to Elijah?
11. What did the angel say to Elijah, when he touched him the second time?
12. The food he ate sustained him _____ days.
13. Mount Horeb was known as the mount of _____.
14. Horeb and _____ are the same.
15. Where did Elijah hide?
16. What does the fact that Elijah wanted to run and hide show us?
17. What question did the LORD ask Elijah?
18. What answer did Elijah give him?
19. Why is Elijah in despair?
20. What were some of the things that passed by Elijah, and God was not in them?
21. What was God in?
22. Our God is a _____.
23. Why did Elijah wrap his face in his mantle?
24. Who had Elijah lost confidence in?
25. Who was Elijah to anoint king of Syria?
26. Who shall he anoint to be king of Israel?
27. How many were left, that had not bowed to Baal?
28. What unusual thing did Elijah do, that showed Elisha would be the prophet to follow Elijah?
29. What did Elisha do, immediately?

30. What did he ask permission to do?
31. What did the burning of his plow and the killing of the oxen show?
32. How many years did Elisha follow Elijah?